

May 7th, 2019

To all my fabulous friends in Germantown,

I could not have had a better time on my visit to Germantown. This has been among the most enjoyable five days of my life. While I have lived in Washington, Oregon, Texas, California, New York City, Paris and London, there is no place on Earth where I have more friends and experience such a warm reception. I love Germantown and all its people. This town has always treated me like royalty. I love that!

For those of my friends I didn't get to see, I am so sorry. But rest assured, I will return soon, no later than next spring.

I love Germantown. What an amazing place and rich history. I am so excited about the new vibe I am feeling. Lots of young people starting families, fully committed to the community and its future. Both from New York City and those from the Hudson Valley, there is a new generation coming forward, and it seems very united in the town's future success. I can't wait to see where you all take this wonderful, 300-year-old town.

All weekend long, everyone has been asking me what I think of the new version of the store that has been here since 1927. I LOVE IT! The amount of love and resources that the new owners have put into that building is awe-inspiring. Few people know the building as well as I do. That building needed the level of rehabilitation that the Tracy, Noah, Dana and Rae have given it. I could not have done that, but I am so happy someone else could. When I saw the pictures of the day-by-day renovations, I viscerally felt the building saying "Ahhhhhhh, thank God someone is taking care of me." She is a 92-year-old building, and she needed this level of attention and love.

Beyond that, I love the new layout, the additional seating that is so inviting to the community, and the attention to detail is amazing. Especially the passion that Tracy Martin has for the environment. Reducing disposable packaging, almost eliminating plastic, and the management of trash and moving to composting, Tracy is truly a steward of the environment. If every person on this planet had her passion and commitment, the world would be a much better place. The town is so fortunate to have these new stewards of this historic store.

That this 92-year-old market still bears my name is such an honor. I told them all when I sold it that they are welcome to use my name as long as it made sense. They could open 500 stores with my name, and I would be proud to be so honored and never want for more than that.

I so appreciate all the kind words that were spoken to me this weekend. If I ever have a crisis in self-esteem, I will simply buy a ticket to Albany and drive down. When I arrived at the airport today, they instantly put an "Oversized Baggage" sticker on my forehead.

Thank you, thank you, thank you Germantown for all the richness you have bestowed upon me. I will be forever grateful, and I am so happy and honored to be a part of the rich history of this fantastic town. See you all soon!

Thank you,

Otto Leuschel